

Morgantown Green Team: Minutes of the December 1, 2014 Meeting

Attending: Lisa Lagana (chair), Jim Kotcon, Michelle Sloane, Ella Belling, Trevor Lloyd, and Pam Cubberly

I. Old Business

Update on Urban Agriculture. Pam Cubberly reported that a volunteer working group that includes Mayor Jenny Selin, Jim Kotcon, herself, City Planner Christopher Fletcher, and a variety of Morgantown residents met at the Blue Moose in November to discuss specific proposed changes to city regulations on chicken raising, beekeeping, and other urban agriculture. At the time of the meeting, Pam had not yet heard from Chris, who was working on drafting revisions in city regulations.

Action: Pam will check with Christopher on progress.

[His Dec. 3 reply: “I am working toward having proposed ordinances submitted to the Planning Commission at their February hearing. I briefed the Planning Commission last week during their December hearing that we were working on the issue [and] that they can expect proposed ordinances in February. I will share with you preliminary drafts in early to mid-January [to] circulate to the working group for review and comment.”]

Update on Open Space Initiative. The November Green Night on Open Space was considered the next step in development of a “Green Network Plan” by a group of volunteers from area green space organization volunteers, the West Virginia Land Trust, and city and county representatives. Many of the ideas considered at the meeting were similar to ones developed several years ago by other open space activists in the area. Rick Landenberger and Ella Belling who are spearheading the effort, have agreed to split up attendance at several future meetings with various groups to raise these ideas more broadly, including the Pedestrian Board and MMGT. The aim is to continue to prioritize a list of ideas and then submit grant proposals to help fund “low-hanging fruit”).

- II. MMGT Input on Progress on Morgantown Comprehensive Plan.** Trevor Lloyd invited the MMGT to provide input into a report on progress made to date on the city’s comprehensive plan. The city council has tasked Morgantown City Planner Christopher Fletcher to summarize plan goals that have been met. When complete, the summary will be made public. Chris asked Trevor to collect short one-sentence statements from the MMGT of environmental goals met through his office and team efforts.

The team discussed areas that could be covered, including improved air quality and ground surface water, protection of environmentally significant areas (greenway network and trees), green buildings (e.g., North Side Fire Station, which has received a LEED certification), waste reduction and recycling, the rail trail and the rain gardens alongside them, etc.

Section 5 on Environment of the comprehensive plan can be found online at:
<http://www.morgantownwv.gov/wp-content/uploads/MCP-5.-Environment-compressed.pdf>.

Action: Trevor will send the Green Team listserv a request for input on concrete accomplishments, e.g., hiring of a consultant, not just planning to do so. [Note: He sent this email on December 3 to the team.]

III. Business Recycling Committee Update. Trevor Lloyd and Michelle Sloane reported on their efforts to date to explore opportunities to expand business recycling in the city as well as related developments with Mon County Solid Waste Authority's changes in service due to budget cuts and other financial issues.

Michelle first summarized a recent report she sent out to the team by email on a great amount of research she has conducted through interviews with stakeholders, online research, etc. (Please contact Michelle for a copy at Sloane.sq@gmail.com).

Other key points/information raised during the discussion:

- Republic Services has arranged pickup of recycling from businesses when approached by a specific business (e.g., Panera pays RS to recycle its cardboard).
- Republic Services has recently conducted an informal survey of businesses on their interest in recycling and has promised Michelle Sloane to send her/Trevor the results.
- Tom Arnold is working with Republic Services on options for business recycling downtown, for example, installing "Vertipaks" dumpsters—one for trash and one for recycling. Businesses would sign up to use these dumpsters, which would be accessible by key. These are compactors of about 3–4 feet wide and 4–5 feet tall. The one for recycling would take mixed waste for recycling as done in current residential single stream recycling.
- In addition to county changes affecting Mon County Solid Waste Authority's financial picture, the city's single-stream recycling program has also affected MCSWA's bottom line as a self-supporting entity. Loss of recycling in the rest of the county would ideally make enough county residents so unhappy they would press for more creative solutions and ultimately even expand recycling in the county.

The discussion then turned to various ideas on how to move business recycling forward:

- Create an ordinance to require businesses to recycle.
- Make recycling free to encourage people to recycle.
- Provide other incentives such as rebates, discounts, recognition, etc.
- Encourage more student recycling, for example, having recycling bins on every dorm floor and/or recycling interns in dorms to encourage behavior change. Focus efforts on older students who are less transient and possibly more involved in the community, that is, in areas with graduate student housing.

- Have city put more pressure on Republic Services in order for the city to have a greater influence on expanding recycling in city
- Set Green Team goal(s) for expanded recycling
- Encourage a “recycling” culture, for example, taking advantage of such national events as “America Recycles Day” (might be a great way to get students involved)
- Not only work with stakeholders on recycling but also look at the overall policy issues with long-term benefits
- Continue to pursue pilots as a way to introduce new approaches and types of recycling.

Several next steps or products were proposed:

- **Meet with new city attorney on solid waste issues** to discuss legal aspects of city expansion of solid waste recycling.

Action: Trevor Lloyd and Michelle Sloane were planning to meet with him. Because Jim Kotcon was involved in developing the solid waste bill, he said he would be interested in attending any meeting with him as well.

- **Propose/develop seminar for small businesses** on opportunities and logistics of different forms of recycling available. Such a seminar could be run by Republic Services through its district sales manager or, possibly, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, which could hold seminars in conjunction with existing chamber meetings or as a special one-time event.

Action: Lisa Lagana said she would get identify key folks at the chamber, including Jack Thompson, so this can be pursued by the team and or intern.

- **Develop a PowerPoint presentation** for use at such a seminar and other venues, which could be converted to other media, such as brochures, and as reinforcing information on the city’s website.

Action: Michelle Sloane said she could work on this before she starts school next year.

- **Ask Andrew DiPietrantonio to take lead** on team business recycling effort once Michelle moves on this winter to a graduate program.

Action: If Andrew is not free, Trevor will pursue other interns to keep the work going.

IV. Green Nights at the Library. Pam Cubberly is continuing to work on three Green Nights for the Winter-Spring:

- **February: “Solar Saturday”** with representatives presenting development of community solar “coops” in WV (as a way to lower costs of residential and other installations) and possibility of one in Morgantown (Pam is developing with Emily Stiever of WV Sun)

- **March:** *Introduction to Composting* by Sandra Cress
- **April:** *Second Annual Green Households Fair* at last Winter Farmer's Market (working with the new market manager, Olivia Luka, and will expand the topics as much as possible).

It was agreed to hold just the three proposed Green Nights listed above, as the recycling committee was not ready to present anything to the public or hold a public discussion on recycling and Pam had not found any other good topics. She will be traveling on and off starting in May so cannot run any additional Green Nights at that point until the fall.

V. Other news.

Baseline Carbon Study for Morgantown. Joey James of Downstream Strategies was unable to attend the meeting but reported later by e-mail that the carbon study report is coming along well and they will soon begin in-home energy assessments. He will give a more detailed presentation at the January meeting, complete with preliminary results, etc.

New City Attorney hired. The city has hired Ryan Simonton as its full-time attorney. Former city attorney Steve Fanok is transitioning to a part-time position.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm. Minutes submitted by Pam Cubberly, December 21, 2014.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, January 5, 2014, 5:30pm to 7:00pm, in City Council Chambers, 389 Spruce Street.